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# Giving Your

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## Baby the

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## Best Start



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## Prenatal Care

Illinois Department of Public Health



## **Giving Your Baby the Best Start**

### **WHY DO I NEED PRENATAL CARE?**

Your baby develops rapidly during the first 3 months of pregnancy.

Starting prenatal care early gives you a better chance to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

You need information on diet, exercise, rest, what to expect as your pregnancy develops and what drugs and substances to avoid to be a healthy mother and have a healthy baby.

***YOUR BABY DESERVES THE BEST START  
YOU AND MEDICAL CARE CAN OFFER.***

### **WHEN DO I BEGIN PRENATAL CARE?**

Make an appointment for a pregnancy test after you have missed one monthly period.

***DON'T PUT IT OFF!***

### **WHERE DO I GO FOR PRENATAL CARE? WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE MONEY?**

Local health departments, neighborhood clinics and private health care providers offer prenatal care. *If you need help, call your local health department or:*

**Illinois Department of Public Health  
MCH Hotline 1-800-545-2200**

***EVERY PREGNANT WOMAN AND HER UNBORN  
INFANT ARE ENTITLED TO HEALTH CARE.***

**CALL FOR PRENATAL CARE TODAY**

# WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN WHEN I GO FOR PRENATAL CARE?

## At your first visit expect:

- A COMPLETE HEALTH HISTORY - this includes questions about your past and present health and past pregnancies.
- Information about the health of your family members.

## Next, your health care provider will do a complete physical examination. Your health care provider should:

- check your blood pressure and temperature
- check your weight and height
- check your mouth and teeth for dental needs
- listen to your heart and lungs
- examine your breasts
- measure the size of your uterus
- perform an internal pelvic examination and pap smear
- test your blood and urine

The examination and tests give information that help your health care provider plan the best care for you and your baby.

Be sure you tell your health care provider about any medications you take, even if you buy them without a doctor's prescription. Tell your health care provider about any street drugs you use, alcohol you drink or anything you smoke.

This information is confidential.

This is very important information to help your health care provider care for you and your baby.

**ANY DRUGS USED DURING PREGNANCY CAN BE HARMFUL TO YOUR BABY. REMEMBER, AVOID SMOKING, ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE.**

## At your first visit ask your health provider:

- what hospital you will go to for the delivery of your baby
- for a phone number to call in case of an emergency (day or night).

**At each visit your health care provider will:**

- check your weight gain
- test your urine
- take your blood pressure
- measure your growing uterus
- listen to your baby's heart beat

**Your health care provider should ask:**

- what you have been eating
- how you are feeling
- how often you feel the baby move

These visits are a good time for you to learn about your pregnancy, ask questions and discuss problems. Make a list of problems or questions to ask at your visits. Remember no question is too foolish. Your health care provider is ready and willing to help you.

***ASK QUESTIONS!***

**HOW OFTEN WILL I GO FOR  
PRENATAL VISITS?**

You should be seen by your health care provider at least:

- once a month for the first 6 months
- every two weeks in the 7th and 8th month, then
- in your 9th month, every week until you deliver

Some women may have more visits if problems arise.

If you don't keep an appointment call to cancel and reschedule.

***EACH APPOINTMENT IS IMPORTANT.  
DON'T SKIP THEM!***

**WHERE WILL I GO FOR EMERGENCY  
TREATMENT OR DELIVERY OF MY BABY?**

Hospital \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

## WHAT PROBLEMS OR DANGER SIGNS SHOULD I CALL MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER ABOUT?

Call your physician/nurse midwife/nurse practitioner/clinic if you have any concerns or questions or even if you don't feel well, but especially if you have:

- vaginal bleeding
- vaginal discharge or a gush of fluid
- pain or burning on urination
- vomiting/constipation/diarrhea
- swelling of feet, hands or face
- severe headache
- blurred vision/double vision/seeing spots
- menstrual-like cramps/low back pain/pressure in your vagina
- signs of infection/chills/fever
- dizziness/fainting
- sharp abdominal pain
- decreased movement of the baby (usually the baby kicks 10 to 12 times in 12 hours, or if you lie down on your side after a meal the baby usually kicks 5 to 6 times in an hour.)  
Report any decrease in activity immediately!

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION. PLEASE HAVE YOUR  
HEALTH CARE PROVIDER COMPLETE THIS CARD FOR  
YOU. CARRY THIS CARD AT ALL TIMES.**

Name _____	Address _____			
Phone _____	Allergies _____			
Age _____	Gr/P _____	LMP _____	EDC _____	by US _____
Sickle Cell _____	Bld. Type/RH _____	Titre _____	Rhogam _____	
Date/H&H _____	Date _____	Glucose Screening _____		
Date/Results:	Pap _____	VDRL _____	GC _____	
Current Medications _____				
Special Problems _____				
Prenatal Care Provider _____				
Address _____	Phone _____			



**Ask your health care provider or prenatal case manager about:**

- WIC
- childbirth classes
- stop smoking classes
- a drug abuse program

**Call the hospital where you are going to deliver about:**

- a tour (so you can see where your baby will be born)
- forms that may need to be filled out before your admission to the hospital

Don't forget to ask questions! If you don't get answers, or if you are not satisfied with the care you are getting, you have the right to change health care providers.

11. *Leucosia* (Leucosia) *leucostoma* (Fabricius) (Fig. 11)

# Illinois Department of Public Health Division of Family Health

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois  
P.O. #31040 60M 4/92  
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